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# A Simple Hike

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136 27 13

## Chapter 1 by Midnight Koi

I don't know how long I've been running. The trees are dense, and I can't tell if it's even day or night. I dropped my cell phone at least an hour ago, and it immediately smashed on a rock. Not like I had reception anyway. My calves are burning, and my lungs feel collapsed. Worst of all, I know it's gaining on me.

It started as just a simple hike. I go on at least one a week. I just park my car on the side of the road at a random place along the forest roads of my area, and hike for a few miles. I always make sure to pack plenty of snacks and water, but I'm out. That means I must have been out here at least a day... I think. Really, time has lost all meaning for me, due to my present predicament.

Honestly, I don't even remember when I first noticed it following me. I just know I started feeling eyes on me, watching my every move. I had pretended, at first, not to notice it. But it was too smart. It knew. Its prey had caught on. So it had started to chase me. And now it was gaining.

## Chapter 2 by Artemis



I knew there was no way to outrun it. It seemed to be tireless, pursuing me. The loud thumping

in my chest, the sharp pain in my legs, the exhaustion... it was all irrelevant. All that mattered was getting away from it.

As I sprinted through the trees, I realized my

only option had to run.

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"How do I outsmart it?" I wonder faintly, as my crazed sprint continues. "Do I make a weapon or do I attempt to evade it?" I hear a growl behind me and force myself to continue this agonizing chase. "I will not be able to continue much longer," I realize, lungs burning, and I hook a 90 degree turn running further into the infinite expanse of foliage.

The beast attempts to turn but it skids past the turn off. I can hear it growl in rage, and my pace slows down just slightly to see what is happening. As I slow down, I look over my shoulder and see it hurtling towards me again, and I continue to run.

Suddenly, I notice a tree, with branches perfect for climbing, only 50 feet away, and realize I could wait it out there. So with the last shards of my strength, I race for the tree.

### Chapter 4 by Wonder Story - In College



As I reach the tree, my legs almost give out. I grab the first branch and haul myself, thankful that I did strength training last month. I hear the beast panting as he nears the tree. *Almost there,*

**Bam!** The beast smacks into the tree, causing it to sway and to make leaves fall. I thought it knocked itself out, but as I look down from my current branch, I see it backing up, getting ready for another blow.

I reach the big branch that I thought I'd be safe on, but I realize that it would be dangerous to sit in a tree that's under attack. **Bam!**

The beast rams the tree more violently, and I hear a creak from above. I look up and see another big branch some way up above my head. It looks like if another blow hit the tree, the branch would fall on me.

### Chapter 5 by KnightLight



"Shit.... SHIT!" I scream over the sound of wood splintering, flying out like shrapnel. This was bad, this was really bad.

My neck whipped up and down, trying to find the beast below. All I could manage to say was "Thank you, that's the last time I climb a tree." I heard a violent crack and the branch fell through my body. I blacked out.

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through my body. I blacked out.  
the sharp edges scaring me.

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And at that moment I swear a light bulb explodes above my head. "YES!".

It's an absolutely stupid idea but hey, better than being impaled or bludgeoned by a tree branch only for your remains to be eaten by a four-legged disaster with gigantic teeth.

So I reach for a decently thick branch nearby that has a sharp end to it, and working quickly I rub the frayed edges against the tree. The branch is heavy, and my arm starts to burn but it's starting to resemble a weapon. The beast, with all his rage, seemed to be getting tired, slowing down slightly after colliding with the tree trunk, which meant a window for me to get away.

I look up, I have maybe two more hits before becoming a human kebab. My branch knife is finished. I let out a long, strangled breath, "okay, show time'.

I watch the beast ready himself for it's next run up, circling back into the bushes. I position myself as much as I can above the target spot, trying to size up how likely it is that I'll break my legs from this height if I miss. I watch as it rumbles forward and sends an earthquake through the tree, the branch above dipping lower toward me. The beast takes exactly 4 seconds to start circling back for another round.

This was it, I point my branch knife directly down. The beast starts it's run up, and my muscles tense up in preparation.

## Chapter 6 by Anna Pelkey



I jump.

It jabs into the back of the four legged beast, and I can hear it groan as it sinks deeper in its back. The sound is deafening I feel my arms giving way as I slip off its back and onto the ground covered in splinters of the tree's remains. I get up and begin to sprint rapidly as far away as I can. However no matter how far I run the sound that beast made stays with me. As I run I begin to recognize things i'd past earlier. A root in the shape of a crescent moon, a puddle of water in the hollow of a tree.

As I'm running the sound of the beast disappears in the distance, and I know that it's running through the woods. I stop and turn around to see if it's still there, but I know nothing can catch me now.

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I get to the road, and there are cars flying by. No one is stopping though. After easily 20 minutes of no one stopping, I wait for a break in the cars and walk to the middle of the road. Now they will have to stop I think to myself. However they just keep rushing at me honking their horns. So I retreat back to the side of the road, waiting for someone to notice me. Eventually a elderly man and woman pull over to give me a ride.

Two people easily in their 70's say they'll allow me to ride with them back to a bus station though I can tell neither is fully on board with letting a stranger ride in there car. Before I even get in their car a deafening hiss comes from the woods behind me.

Before I see it I know what it is. The beast is back.....

## Chapter 7 by Xycronic



With a deafening roar, the monster slams into the back of the car. Airbags inflate, cushioning the blows, but the entire thing flips. We crash, upside-down in a ditch by the road.

I scream in pain as I hear my leg crack. Oh no. That's not good. As I try to pull my broken leg out from under the seat, I notice the grim scene in the front part of the car.

The two people's faces are mangled, destroyed by the impact. Blood drips everywhere. I begin to hyperventilate.

"Oh god, oh god, this can't be happening..."

A growl fills the air as a ginormous paw smashes through the underside of the car and begins to feel around.

This is happening.

I kick wildly, somehow flailing enough to roll myself into the cracked window. The beast grabs the driver and pulls him out.

There is only one sound I can hear. The sound of skin being torn from the bone of flesh. The sound of death

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BAM.

*Crunch.*

## BAM.

With a tinkling and a crashing, the window explodes out onto the dirt. I begin to squeeze through, not caring about the lacerations or cuts I get from the broken glass. Even my leg, burning with agony, will not stop me. I need to get away from that thing.

I desperately hook my fingers into the uphill slope back to the road. Maybe someone will see me, and they'll be able to help me. It's a long shot but it's better than sitting around and dying.

*Crunch.*

The beast sounds about done. If it isn't full after pulling the second person out, I'm next. Oh god, the people. I didn't even know their names.

I climb up onto the road. What once was a busy street now seems deserted. Limping and cursing, I make my way to the center of the asphalt before I collapse and take a respite.

The top of the beast looms over the edge of the ditch. It's coming after me.

Mindlessly, I reach inside my pockets. Where's that branch knife? Instead, I cut my already scratched-up hands on a shard of glass, easily as long as my hand.

The beast is on the road. The branch is still sticking out of its thick hide, and it looks mad.

All I wanted to do was go on a hike, but now I'm here.

Lying on the ground, I grimace and pull myself up to my full height. Time to fight or die trying. My leg barely supports my weight, but it'll hold it while it counts.

"Alright, you damn monster. You wanna dance?"

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Chapter 3 by Wonder Story

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The beast still hasn't moved. I'm not sure if it's dead or just unconscious. I need to get to a hospital or else I might end up in the morgue.

The beast strikes its head forward, mouth open and revealing three rows of teeth as sharp as the glass in my hand. I've never fought a monster in my life so I looked away as I lunged my arm forward with all my might. The glass, somehow without breaking, pierces the skin right between the beast's eyes. I hear a loud crack as the glass goes through the skull and step away from the swaying beast. After a moment, it falls down, the blood oozing from the wound flowing continuously.

"Whew." I lay on the ground in a heap—"I need an ambu—"

I was out cold.

I woke up on the ground. The grass is soft and sunlight streams onto my face. Also something wet. I get up and discover that my leg is fine and that there is a dog looking at me curiously. Surveying the area, I see that I'm deep in the forest. I see my regular running path a little way off, but I have no memory of how I strayed.

Stroking the puppy, I thought about the dream I had and decided that although, it was level 100 terrifying, it was a bit of a thrill. But nothing beats a simple hike.

**the end**

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